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DISCUSSES SOVIET DOMINATION OF ALBANIA

(The following article was taken from the Zagreb newspaper, Narodni Dom.)

Albania today is dominated by a group of Soviet bureaucrats who occupy important positions in every ministry and permit no one else to have a say in the conduct of affairs. The Albanians are privileged only to listen and to pay the large salaries of these bureaucrats. Soviet specialists have taken over control of the army and have converted the island of Saseno (Sazan) into a base for Soviet submarines. Other military specialists have installed large-caliber coastal batteries along the coast from Shengjin to Sarande. Soviet parachutists have been sent to Albania as well as fighter, bomber, and jet planes.

Soviet military specialists have exerted great efforts to raise the strength of the Albanian army to 135,000. The organization, training, uniforms, and armament of this army are modeled after their Soviet counterparts. As yet, no tanks have arrived from the USSR, but 3.5- and 4-ton ZIS type trucks are being imported. Between 1947 and 1949, railroads were constructed between Durres and Tirana, and Durres and Pegin, which are now being used for military purposes. The Hoxha regime attempted to build strategic roads, but was forced to be satisfied with the repair of the existing ones. On orders from the Moscow specialists, the Hoxha regime is having many barracks built, including three in Tirana.

The large military expenses are a heavy burden on the people and are straining the economic structure of the country. The national currency is now worthless, and the country is drowning in a sea of inflation.

The Soviets are exploiting Albania's natural resources. Moscow specialists are working the chrome mines in the vicinity of Kukesh in northern Albania, the copper mine at Rrubig 40 kilometers south of Shkoder, and the oil fields near Kucove in southern Albania.

Large Soviet vessels are making regular trips to Durres. For example, the 5,630-ton ship Plekhanov, formerly the US ship Charles Christenson, is now carrying chrome ore from Durres to Constanta from where it is sent to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.

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